The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

BULLETIN SIXTY-EIGHT SUMMER, 1959

THE 1959 ANNUAL MEETING . . .

The nineteenth annual meeting of the Thoreau Society was called to order in the First Parish Church of Concord at 10:30 a.m., July 11, 1959, by the president, J. Lyndon Shanley. A greeting from the Town of Concord was delivered by Mr. John Finegan of the Concord Board of Selectmen. The secretary's report was accepted as recorded in Bulletin 64. The treasurer gave the following report:

On hand, July 8, 1958		478.94
Income		
Gifts	32.80	
Dues & back publicat.	385.10	
Life memberships	375.00	
		795.90
Expenses		
Annual meeting	95.00	
Printing	322.82	
Postage	249.86	
Misc.	17.71	
		685.39
On hand, July 8, 1959		589.45

Mr. Anton Kovar gave the report of the nominating committee: president, Paul Oehser, Washington, D.C.; vice-president, Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, Concord, Mass.; secretary-treasurer, Walter Harding, Geneseo, N.Y.; members of the executive committee for three years: Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, Concord, Mass.; Mrs. Charles Edwards, Mt. Clemens, Mich. The report was accepted and the nominees duly elected.

Mr. Truman Nelson of Salem, Mass. spoke on "A Plea for Henry Thoreau," commemorating the centennial of Thoreau's defense of John Brown.

Mr. J. Lyndon Shanley of Evanston, Ill., delivered the presidential address on "The Pleasures of WALDEN." Both addresses are being prepared for publication elsewhere, notice of which will be given in the bulletin.

Luncheon was served in the vestry of the church at 12:45, followed by an extension of the business meeting. Mr. Robert Needham, Treasurer of the Save Walden Committee, gave the following report:

Receipts		
To March 1, 1959	5948.85	
To July 9, 1959	2671.51	
		8620.35
Expenditures		
Legal services	5349.74	
Stenographer	828.00	
Printing & postage	110.50	
Misc.	15.57	
		6303.81
On hand		2316.54

It was announced that since the appeal to the Massachusetts Supreme Court would cost approximately the same as the original case, the Save Walden Committee would need approximately $2700.00 to carry through their work.

It was voted that the executive committee be empowered to appoint an ad hoc committee to formulate plans for the centennial of Thoreau's death in 1962, a report to be made at the annual meeting in 1960.

It was voted that the secretary be instructed to send to Mr. Samuel Wellman of Cleveland, Ohio, a note of gratitude and appreciation for his gift of four bronze markers which have been placed at Thoreau's birthplace on Virginia Road, at the Texas House on Belknap Street, at the Thoreau-Alcott House on Main Street, and at the site of the jail just off the Mill Dam.

It was voted that the society endorse the efforts of the Save Walden Committee and encourage them to further efforts.

The meeting was adjourned for informal tours of Concord to see the new bronze markers, to visit Walden Pond, and to see the special exhibition of materials from the Thoreau Society Archives at the Concord Free Public Library.

The meeting was reconvened at 8 p.m. in the First Parish vestry when Mrs. Esther Anderson of Concord showed kodachrome slides and read appropriate quotations from Thoreau's "Autumnal Tints."

Mr. Robert Needham gave a brief report on the proposed national Lexington-Concord Battle Road historic site and the society voted to endorse his efforts.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m. Special thanks are due to Mrs. Esther Anderson for preparing bouquets of wild flowers mentioned in Thoreau's journals and to the women of the First Parish Church for serving coffee prior to the morning session.

The executive committee, at its meeting on July 10, voted to propose an amendment to the society's by-laws, raising the dues from one to two dollars a year. This amendment will be voted on at the 1960 annual meeting.

THOREAU'S WINGED CAT . . . Raymond Adams

Dear Mr. Adams,

. . . I thought you might find this unusual little news item interesting. I found it in STARS AND STRIPES, the Armed Forces Newspaper (I am serving with the Army in Korea).

In WALDEN Thoreau describes a 'winged cat' that was taken in by a farm family in Lincoln in 1841. Thoreau's cat and the one in West Virginia differ in color; but otherwise they appear to be very similar, bushy tails and all. . . .

Sincerely yours, Jimmy W. Thomas.

* * *

WEST VIRGINIA YOUTH FINDS CAT WITH 'WINGS'

Pineville, W. Va. (AP) - A 15-year-old boy has nabbed an odd freak -- a cat with a winglike growth.

Douglas Shelton, high school freshman at this southern West Virginia community, said he was in the woods the other day when he noticed the animal treed by a dog.

He shinnied up and captured the cat, then took a good look at his prize.

The female cat is 30 inches long, has a bushy tail and attractive white fur like a persian cat.

Each wing is about 6 inches long. They appear to be boneless but evidently cartilege gives them their shape.

The wings are also a barometer of the cat's temper -- she lifts them when angered.

A local veterinarian said he has never heard of such an animal.

* * *

NOTE: Bird watchers had better be on the lookout for these cats. Evidently they are migratory and in the course of 118 years go from Lincoln to Pineville. This

Flederkatze would be just the thing to catch the Fledermauze.--R.A.

THE WILL OF H.G.O.BLAKE . . .

When Thoreau died in 1862, his manuscripts were left to his mother and sister Sophia. When Sophia died in 1876, she willed the manuscripts to Thoreau's old Worcester friend, Harrison G. O. Blake. When Blake died in 1898, the manuscripts were willed to his friend, E. Harlow Russell, principal of the Worcester Normal School. While the manuscripts were in Mr. Russell's possession, the journals were transcribed and published in fourteen volumes by Houghton Mifflin Co. in 1906. Most of these manuscripts are now in the Morgan Library in New York City.

Edmund Schofield Jr. of Worcester, Mass. has uncovered some interesting documents concerning the will of Mr. Blake and they are herewith printed below:

FROM THE WILL OF H. G. O. BLAKE
Will allowed May 3, 1898
IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN.

Be it remembered that I, Harrison G. O. Blake, of Worcester, in the County of Worcester and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby make, publish and declare this to be my last will and testament, hereby revoking and declaring null and void any and all former wills, or instruments in the nature of a will, by me at any time heretofore made, that is to say:....

ITEM TWO, To E. Harlow Russell, of Worcester aforesaid, my friend and companion, I give and bequeath my books, or such of them as he may desire. I desire also that he should take charge of my letters, papers, manuscript and manuscript letters, and whatsoever of a like nature I may leave, to make what disposition of them may seem to him proper and suitable, leaving to his discretion and judgment their ultimate disposition....

ITEM SEVEN, My income which I have been accustomed to receive, and which is derived from the writings of Henry D. Thoreau, I order and direct to be paid over to George S. Thatcher, of Bangor, in the State of Maine, the Executor of the will of Sophia E. Thoreau, or his executor, administrator or assigns, to be used by him for the benefit of the relatives of said Thoreau who may need such assistance, he himself to exercise his discretion in the payment of this money, and to use a wise judgment in its application.

In 1903 HARRISON G. O. BLAKE. Equity

To the Honorable the Judge of the Probate Court in and for the County of Worcester:

Respectfully represents E. Harlow Russell, of Worcester, in the County of Worcester and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting under Item Two of the will of Harrison G. O. Blake, late of Worcester, aforesaid, Petitioner, that he brings the will of the late Harrison G. O. Blake aforesaid, and B. B. Thatcher, of Bangor, in the State of Maine, acting under Item Seven of said will, a copy of which is hereto annexed and made a part of this bill, as he is the executor of the will of George S. Thatcher, Respondents, and alleges them to be all the parties interested in the matter of said petition and said petitioner further represents

That under the said Item of said will he received into his hands and had charge of the letters, papers, manuscripts and manuscript letters referred to in said Item, among which were the journals of Henry D. Thoreau, subsequently referred to in Item Seven;

And your petitioner further alleges that a certain portion of said journals had been published heretofore by the late Harrison G. O. Blake, and that said Blake had received therefrom certain incomes or monies which he had been accustomed to devote in part to the heirs of the late Henry D. Thoreau:

And your petitioner further represents that under Item Seven of said will, the income which said Blake had been accustomed to receive and which is derived from the writings of Henry D. Thoreau, Harrison G. O. Blake aforesaid orders and directs to be paid over to George S. Thatcher, of Bangor, in the State of Maine;

And your petitioner further alleges that he has recently received an offer from a responsible publishing house whereby said manuscripts of said Thoreau are to be published and given to the world and certain sums of money are to be paid therefor, and your petitioner desires to be directed as to the disposition of the proceeds thereof and asks;

[The questions here are the same as on the next page.]

ESTATE OF HARRISON G. O. BLAKE. E. Harlow Russell Petitioner. Henry E. Hill exor et als Respondents. Petition and Decree. Equity. For instructions Filed April 24, 1903. Decree April 30, 1903.

First, whether said proceeds shall be paid to said Thatcher referred to in Item Seven of said will, his executor, administrator and assigns;
Second, whether said proceeds shall be paid to the executor of said will by him paid to said Thatcher;
Third, whether said proceeds shall be paid to the executor of said will as a part of the residuary estate of said Blake; or
Fourth, whether said proceeds and income shall be retained by him under Item Two of said will.*

WHEREFORE, your petitioner prays that the parties respondent to this bill may be summoned into court and that a decree may be entered in the above matter

*Fifth, Whether the money if any derived under items two of said will shall be held by him in trust and if so who is the cest qui trust. This fifth article was added on as it is given here.

Dated this 24 day of April, 1903. Signed E. Harlow Russell. Signed below by Henry Eveleth Hill and other respondents.

ESTATE OF HARRISON G. O. BLAKE. E. Harlow Russell Petitioner. B.B. Thatcher, ex et al Respondent. Equity. Respondents' Answer. Of B. B. Thatcher Ex' or Filed April 24, 1903.

To the Honorable the Judge of the Probate Court in and for the County of Worcester: E. Harlow Russell Petitioner B. B. Thatcher Ex. Geo. S. Thatcher Henry E. Hill Ex Respondents. Respondent's Answer [In the most unreadable hand conceivable] And now comes B. B. Thatcher Ex of will of Geo S. Thatcher late of Bangor Maine and for answer says that under item 7 of the will of H. G. O. Blake he claims all the income derived from the works of

Thoreau under item two and item seven & submits the questions set forth in said bill to the Court. B. B. Thatcher, Ex. By H. E. Hill, Atty.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
WORCESTER, ss.

At a Probate Court holden a Worcester.... 30 April, 1903

On the petition in equity of E. Harlow Russell petitioner, against Henry E. Eveleth . Hill, as executor of the will of Harrison G. O. Blake and B. B. Thatcher as executor of the will of George S. Thatcher, Respondents,

praying for instructions as to the ownership and disposition of certain letters, papers, manuscript, and letters in the position of said petitioner it appearing that notice has been given all parties interested, that said respondent, Henry E. Hill, has waived further pleadings, and said respondent, B. B. Thatcher has answered, after hearing and consideration, the Court doth decree that under the provisions of the second item of said will, the letters, papers, manuscript and manuscript letters therein are given absolutely to the petitioner E. Harlow Russell, with full power to publish any unpublished journals or other manuscripts and the proceeds of any such publications belong to him free from any trust. Signed William T. Forbes Judge of Probate Court

NOTES AND QUERIES . . .

The cost of printing this bulletin has been paid for by the life membership of J. M. Lauber of Archbold, Ohio. Life membership in the Thoreau Society is twenty-five dollars. We are also indebted to the following sustaining members of the society for contributions: Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, Concord, Mass.; Mr. James E. Sisson, Berkeley, Calif.; and Mr. Alvin Whitney, Delmar, New York.

On April 24, Prof. Anton M. Huffert of Adelphi College read a paper on "Thoreau's Critical Reaction to Goethe" at the University of Kentucky Foreign Language Conference at Lexington.

Prof. Frederick T. McGill Jr. of Rutgers University, spoke on Thoreau on the radio program "Pioneers of Prose and Poetry" over Station WOR on June 6.

The comic strip "Judge Parker" for June 1, 1959, syndicated in many newspapers, has one of its characters citing Thoreau as a model for living.

Mrs. John Haverstick (340 East 72nd St., New York 21, N.Y.) is writing a life of Bronson Alcott and his daughter Louisa May, which will show them not only in relation to each other, but also in relation to their times.

Ellen Glasgow, in her posthumous autobiography, THE WOMAN WITHIN (New York, 1957, p. 196) says, "The American authors I admired so heartily were . . . Hawthorne, Thoreau, Emerson, or Poe."

C.T. JACKSON ON THOREAU . . Walter Harding

The following little known obituary of Thoreau was written by Dr. C. T. Jackson, Emerson's brother-in-law, and published in the PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOSTON SOCIETY OF NATURAL HISTORY, IX (1862-1863), 70-72:

May 21, 1862...Dr. C. T. Jackson read the following notice of the death of Mr. Thoreau:--

Henry D. Thoreau, of Concord, Mass., died, at the age of 44 years, of pulmonary consumption.

His grandfather was a French emigrant from the island of Guernsey, and settled in Concord. His father was well known as a manufacturer of black-lead pencils, an art which young Thoreau learned, but never practised as a business, his tastes leading him wholly into the field of science, while he abhored trade.

Henry D. Thoreau was distinguished for the great accuracy of his observations, and for the thoroughness with which he executed every research upon which he entered. He was esteemed as an accurate land surveyor, the only business upon which he ever entered for pay. As a botanist he was highly esteemed by those who are the best judges of the subject.

As an observer of the habits of animals he was unrivalled. He would wait all day, if it was necessary, for a bird to approach him. He said their curiosity would bring them to examine him if he would remain quiet long enough; and he generally managed to make familiar acquaintance with all living creatures he met with in his rambles through the forest. Thoreau had a genuine love of nature, and pursued natural history for his own gratification, and not with any ambitious views. He was greatly troubled to find that anything had escaped the observation of eminent naturalists, and seemed to be surprised that anything should have been left for him to discover.

Thoreau was a man of original genius, and very peculiar in his views of society and the ways of life. He was conscientiously scrupulous, and was opposed to adding or abetting, even by a poll-tax, measures which he did not approve of, and therefore got into trouble occasionally with the constituted authorities of the town, who could not indulge him in his opposition to a tax because any part of it might go to support the militia; so they twice shut him up in the jail, from whence his friends took him by paying his tax against his protest.

His published works are full of knowledge of the secrets of nature, and are enlivened by much quaint humor, and warmed with kindness towards all living beings. Those who knew Thoreau best loved and appreciated him most.

Dr. Jackson proposed the following resolutions, which were adopted:--

Resolved, That the Boston Society of Natural History has learned with profound regret the premature decease of their corresponding member, Henry D. Thoreau, of Concord, who was a most faithful and devoted student of nature, a keen and appreciating observer, whose researches, had longer life been granted him, promised important acquisitions to science.

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the mother and sister of this eminent naturalist, with expressions of the warm sympathy of this Society in their great loss.

Dr. Jackson announced the donation of Mr. Thoreau's collections to the Society.

These consisted of

1. His collection of New England pressed plants, numbering more than one thousand species, arranged by himself, together with those western plants collected in his journey of 1861.
2. His collection of birds' eggs and nests, carefully identified by himself, composed of New England species.
3. The collection of Indian antiquities, consisting of stone implements and weapons (chiefly) found by himself in Concord.

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY.WH

Barton, W. G. "Thoreau, Flagg, and Burroughs." EMERSON SOCIETY QUARTERLY, XV (1959), 51-64. Reprinted from Hist. Coll. of Essex Inst. for 1885.

Bode, Carl. "Thoreau's Manuscript Poems in Private Hands." ESQ, XIV (1959), 17-18. Same as in TSB 66.

Cameron, Kenneth W. "Chronology of Thoreau's Harvard Years." ESQ, XV (1959), 2-108. Facsimile reproduction of grade books, attendance records, and other documents pertaining to Thoreau's Harvard years.

-----. "Thoreau and Emerson in Channing's Letters to the Watsons." ESQ, XIV (1959) 77-85. Catalog of a collection recently given to Concord Free Public Library. Many notations on Thoreau's last illness. Appendix of material on his friend Marston Watson.

-----. "Thoreau in the Court of Common Pleas (1854)" ESQ, XIV (1959), 86-89. Source material on T's appearance as a witness in a dispute over a water-privilege.

-----. "Thoreau's Diploma Again." ESQ, XV (1959), 48-49. Evidence that it was fairly usual for Harvard students to reject their M.A. diploma as T. did.

-----. "Thoreau's New Poems." ESQ, XIV (1959), 21-32. Facsimiles of manuscripts in Washington University Library.

Crowely, Richard C. "Thoreau's Correspondence." COMMONWEAL, LXX (May 15, 1959), 186. A violent denunciation of Thoreau.

Darrow, F.S. "The Transcendentalists and Theosophy." NEW OUTLOOK, XI (March, 1958), 8-18. Includes quotations on Thoreau's interest in transmigration and pre-existance.

Harding, Walter and Carl Bode. THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU. Review. NEW LEADER, XLII (June 15, 1959), 16

Hendrick, George. "Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience' in Gandhi's INDIAN OPINION." ESQ, XIV (1959), 19-20. Reprints excerpts from CD that Gandhi had reprinted in his South African newspaper.

Hutchison, William R. THE TRANSCENDENTALIST MINISTERS: CHURCH REFORM IN THE NEW ENGLAND RENAISSANCE. New Haven: Yale, 1959. 241pp. $4.50. Although Thoreau is mentioned only briefly in this book, it is, nonetheless, an exceedingly important volume for those who would understand Thoreau's ways of thinking. Here, in concise, cogent form, is a lucid discussion of the rise of the theory of Transcendentalism and its influence particularly upon the clergy and the religious doctrines of the time. A thoroughly worthwhile book and one that every student of Transcendentalism should own.

LIVING WILDERNESS. "Walden Pond Still Endangered." Spring, 1959. pp. 32-3.

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Morrison, Helen Barber. THOREAU TODAY. Review. ESQ, XIV (1959), 42.

Munson, Gorham. "First Penobscot Vacationist" in PENOBSCOT: DOWN EAST PARADISE. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1959, pp. 15-41. An account of Thoreau's visits to Maine, including many new details concerning his voyages from Boston to Bangor and a thoughtful critical account of his tours of the Maine Woods. This book is an important source book for background material on T's Maine visits. There is also extensive information about Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, the foremost authority on Thoreau's MAINE WOODS.

Paul, Sherman. THE SHORES OF AMERICA. Reviews. NEW LEADER, XLII (June 15, 1959), 16. NATION, CLXXXVIII (April 18, 1959), 345-346.

Rocker, Rudolf. "Henry David Thoreau." SOLIDARIDAD (Montevideo, Uruguay). May 1, 1959. pp. 50-52.

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Stoller, Leo. AFTER WALDEN. Review. ESQ, XIV (1959), 36.

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-----. SHIZEN TO JINSEI. Trans. into Japanese by Yoshikatsu Motono. Tokio: Shin-ei-Sha. A collection of Thoreau's essays.

Willson, Lawrence. "Thoreau and New England's Weather." WEATHERWISE, XII (June, 1959), 91-94, 118-124. The first authoritative study of Thoreau's interest in the weather, with many quotations from his works, including many from unpublished notebooks.

-----. "Thoreau--Citizen of Concord." ESQ, XIV (1959), 7-12. On Thoreau's interest in the history of Concord.

Wisbey, Herbert A. Jr. "Thoreau's Last Trip to Cape Cod." CAPE COD MAGAZINE. 1959. Unpaged. Brief essay on T's last excursion to the Cape.

I am indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: R.Adams, E. Armand, H.Adel, T.Bailey, R.Cosbey, M. Campbell, H.Gottschalk, A.Huffert, N. Lehrman, G.Manley, C.Miskell, P.Oehser, E.Schofield, E.Stockton, R.Schaedle, A. Shedd, D.Usher, E.Thoreau, J.Williams, G. Wright, and V. Munoz.

The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an informal organization of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Its bulletins are issued quarterly; its booklets, occasionally. Annual meetings are held in Concord each July. Officers of the society are Paul Oehser, Washington, D.C., president; Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, Concord, vice-president; and Walter Harding, secretary-treasurer. Annual membership is one dollar; sustaining membership, two to twenty-four dollars; life membership, twenty-five dollars. Communications concerning membership or publications should be addressed to the secretary

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